

752 Tibetan friends prefer rancid butter, but in Ladak at any rate, those who can afford to be so are most particular that the butter shall be fresh, never melted previously, and without a strong smell. The resulting concoction to us tastes more like soup, and few Westerners can stand more than one
 262 or two cups without disastrous results. For the Tibetan on the other hand it is one of his staple foods, its butter helps to supply the carbo-hydrates which he so rarely takes in the form of sugar, though he gets plenty of starch from his uncooked barley-flour, mixed with water or tea. The fat also warms and sustains him in the bitter winter, and as this separates
 [415] out if allowed to cool but slightly, his cup is supplied with a metal lid and saucer if he moves in better circles, and his wife or attendant constantly adds hot tea as soon as there is any room to fill up. In this way over twenty cupfuls may be
 574 taken at one midday meal. For us it is a very trying custom when we visit our Ladaki friends, and we have to explain that, just as much of our tea (fortunately for us !) upsets them, so our internal economy can only deal with a small supply of their favourite beverage ! Another difficulty for us is to sit cross-legged on the floor for so long, and, although we know it is bad manners to stretch out legs, eventually when stiff knees or needles and pins become intolerable, we have to ask our host or hostess to excuse the position. To return to the fireplace
 554 —we find the seats of election are on the side of the stove
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 [354] opposite the bellows, for here is a little trough into which the hot ashes are pushed through from the other side, as aeration necessitates. Squatting cross-legged on mats round these hot embers, which can be constantly raked over with a rough fire-spoon or even the hardened fingers of our native friends, we can stretch our hands out over the warmth, and renew the glowing vitality by occasionally leaning over to give a few good blows. This cosy corner is, of course, the warmest at night, and given to either the weakest or most distinguished
 000 member of the household. The Doctor Mem sahib once had

595 shall try to show why in some cases
121 polyandry is fraternal, and in others non-
fraternal.

162 The province of Ladak, which I visited,
197 is inhabited by Tibetans speaking an
733 ancient form of the language. Tibet, of
643 course, is run by the Lamaist church and
361 the head of the country is the Dalai Lama.
341 The former kings of Tibet have taken
131 refuge in Ladak since the 8th century A. D.
175 and live in the castle of Leh. The town
is very characteristic of Tibetan towns.
Flat-roofed houses are very well built on
the side of high mountains. The altitude
is 12,000 feet, the entire area is snowed in
during the winter, and the people live
mostly in their houses and do not go out.

[512]

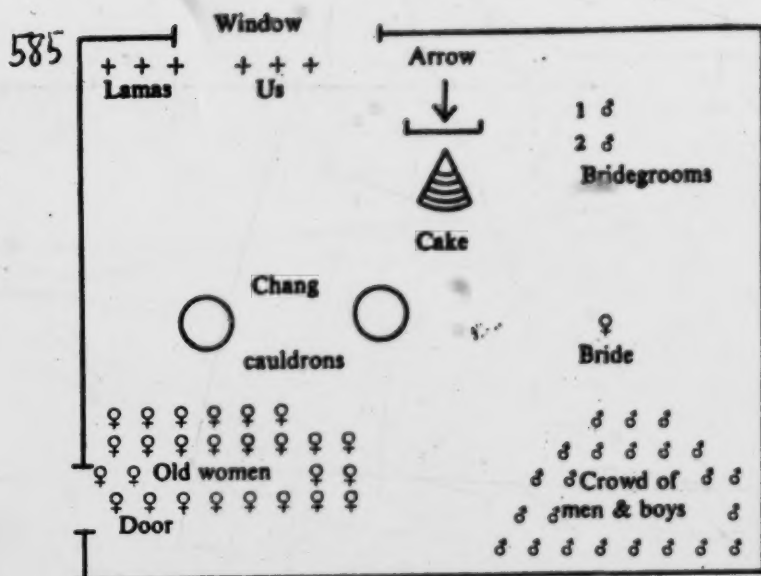
114 These Tibetan houses are not very dif-
123 ferent from our own western type of
35+ houses, except in one respect. The kitchen
here has no chimney, so it can be imagined
how much smoke fills the room when they
cook. The Tibetans do not seem to mind;
though we personally found it very difficult
to stand upright in their kitchens when
they were cooking and so spent most of
our time there on all fours, to avoid the
smoke and keep our eyes from watering.
The people suffer from eye trouble because
of this practice and yet they seem to stick
to it in a very curious manner.

291 The characteristic dress of the Ladak
301 women is of red cloth such as the men
523 wear. They have a sheepskin toga which
428 they throw over their shoulders and a very
characteristic head-dress, made of a piece
of red felt with two enormous ears of black
wool. The red felt band is studded with
turquoises at the back, family heirlooms,
handed down from mother to daughter.
Such a headdress is known as a *perak*.

291 The men are tough-looking. They very
857 often have their right shoulders bare;
though sometimes they have a Chinese
shirt thrown over them. When they are
working, they usually have the right
shoulder uncovered, however cold the
weather may be. Looking at Tibetan
children, one could imagine at first sight

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THE ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY



Sketch 1. Plan of main room of Tolag-pa House of Gumling during the polyandrous wedding there on the 1st July, 1938.

[292] other two being very young and fidgety and incapable of behaving as they should at their wedding. The eldest of the brothers was on the right and he wore a yellow silk gown with a bright green sash diagonally across it, a charm box round his neck and a little Lahuli embroidered hat on his head. His brother was plainly dressed in everyday clothes and was seated on his left.

[782] In front of the eldest brother, in a square box full of grain, stood a tall arrow with prayer flags attached to the head. Next to it, and in front of the second bridegroom, there was a conical cake of *tsampa* with the small figure of a goat fashioned out of butter at the top. In the centre of the room were two huge cauldrons of *chang*, enough to keep the party going for quite some time. The back of the room, facing us, was full of people, many old women on our right, and a mixed group of men and boys just opposite.

[354] The bride was brought in and dumped near the younger brother, to his left. She remained lying there without moving, still gently moaning but having given up her violent protests. The room was in darkness when she was carried in, but no sooner had she been put down on the

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floor, than small lamps on every pillar in the room were lit and gave us all the light we needed to follow the next part of the ceremony.

A man called the *La-btag-pa* (*La-bTag-pa*) now came forward with a large branch of juniper in his hand. He set fire to it from one of the lamps and with a knife, which he held in the other hand, he cut a piece out of the conical *tsampa* cake and offered it loudly to a god whom he called Tangyer of Kior. The Wazir told me afterwards that the latter was the name of a neighbouring village really called Piukar, while the god's actual appellation was Kularapa. It was never done, however, to call upon him and his village openly by their real name, and thus they were both called upon in the way which I heard.

The same *La-btag-pa* then took what remained of the cake and offered it to the bride and bridegrooms. A shout went up from the crowd looking on and we heard that this was the crucial moment when they became husbands and wife. The cake was presented cross-armed by the officiator, that is to say, after he had got rid of the burning juniper branch (which was thrown out of the window), he took one large slice in each hand and, facing the wedding party, offered what he had in his right hand to the men, and the contents of the left to the girl. Everybody watched to see how the pieces would be taken. If they are snatched, it means that the partners are very much in love. If the woman takes her piece slowly, reluctantly, it means that she is in love with someone else. Should the cake be refused and the slices returned, this means that the marriage is refused. In this case, they seemed to accept the proffered food quite naturally, without either snatching or hesitating, so that everyone present shouted their approval.

After that, *chang* was passed to the assembled company, beginning with the two bridegrooms. When it reached us, the Thakur told me that the ceremony was finished and that we could go. As we went out, leaving our guide to remain and enjoy the fun, I noticed that the Garas started beating their drums again; they had been silent since the bride had been carried into the main room to be formally wed. We were cordially invited to return the next day, as we were told that rejoicings would go on now for another two days and two nights.

In the morning, on July 2nd 1938, we returned to Tolag-pa house, to continue our experience of a Lahuli polyandrous wedding. Thakur Partap Chand again accompanied us, and from him I heard what had happened after our departure the day before, and during the night.

It seemed that the bride had retired at about 11.30 p.m., with the women who helped her to undress. The bridegrooms remained with the

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representatives of the other lamaist sub-divisions, the *Gelug-pa* (*dGe-Lugs-pa*) or Yellow Hats and the *Nyingma-pa* (*sNing-ma-pa*) or Red Hats. The Moslems are all Shias, often called Baltis because of their affinity to those people. An exception are the Sinkiang Turki and Uigur merchants who live in Leh and constitute a foreign minority; these people are orthodox Sunnis. They have intermarried with the local Buddhist Ladaki women, and their offspring are known in Leh as *Argons*; there are about 300 of these, and they are classified with the Moslems, to whose religion they always belong. A small ethnic group of distinctively different racial appearance, is constituted by the Dards living in the extreme west of Ladak. Culturally they are Buddhists like the bulk of the population, but they are fair with blue eyes, and their features are those of the Nordics of Europe. [162] 795 [563] [563] [142]

The language spoken in the whole of Ladak is a dialect of Tibetan, the characteristic of which is that it is more archaic in form than the Tibetan spoken in Lhasa, where the language has gone through a process of considerable evolution. Dogra is spoken by the ruling officials of the Kashmir State and the Dards have a tongue of their own, an Aryan language. 197

In physical appearance, the ordinary Ladaki men and women resemble their Tibetan cousins in that they have broad, mongoloid faces, slit eyes and black, straight hair. The men, however, have more hair on their faces than the average Tibetan can grow, and this is a distinctive characteristic. The masculine costume is the same as I have described earlier for Rupchu, and I should add that both sexes wear their hair long, but plaited at the back. Washing among the peasantry is resorted to very little, and the general appearance of the Ladakis is untidy and dirty, not to mention the fact that they smell strongly. When the weather gets chilly in the winter, or when a voyage to some other part of the country necessitates going through a colder area, more clothes are simply worn over those already on the body, and temperatures are measured by the number of gowns one is obliged to put on. 142

The houses of the peasants and of the majority of the inhabitants of Leh are solid structures built of stone in traditional Tibetan style. They are pleasant to look at with their flat roofs, white-washed walls and gaily painted doors and windows (the lower part of which is usually broader than the upper part), but they have the drawback of having a stable for the horses and mules on the ground floor, and no chimney in the kitchen, the smoke being allowed to find its own way out through the cracks and joints of the ceiling and roof. 342 [331] [354]

The latter had been married off very early to Sonam of the Takpa household, in *bag-ma*, and Stobgyal had taken Tsering Yangdzen as his wife. He had then moved into the main part of the Tok-Tok house, and the two fathers had taken up their quarters in two small rooms on the second floor. Stobgyal had had two sons with his first wife, Tsering Murup and Tsering Norpel, and these two boys had also married polyandrously to become the rightful occupants of the *k'hang-chen*. They, their wife Chungnid and their two small children, Pandzom and Dok-pa, lived on the first floor, while Stobgyal remained in his quarters, provisionally. It appeared that he had not yet moved into a *k'hang-gu* as he should have done, because he had remarried after having become a widower, and had had five children by his second wife, Lha-dzom.

With so many people about the house, I found conditions a bit strenuous. The kitchen held a certain number of the children, and Lha-dzom was in there cooking. I went in to see her, but was soon driven out by the smoke, which had no chimney by which to escape, and filled the room down to about knee level. I did remain there for a short time to look round, with my head bent down to that height to keep my eyes from watering, but I soon gave it up and retreated to rejoin old Lobsang. We went out to take a photograph in which he, his brother, their son, Chungnid, and Sonam Döndrup, Lha-dzom's second son, agreed to pose, the two last ones with Dok-pa and Gon-po in their arms (see Fig. 37).

Then we went in again, and sat down on carpets in the largest room on the first floor, which happened to be the one in which the *lha-k'hang* was, and had a cup of tea while we continued to discuss their family affairs. I enquired about their fields and the cultivation, the trade and their travels, and heard how their polyandry was regulated. It is from such information from these people and from others that I was able to get a clear picture of the conditions in which polyandry flourished in Ladak.

Lobsang Tok-Tok complained bitterly of the "immorality" of young people in Leh. He said that polyandry was no longer desired by the younger generation, and that this was all due to outside influence from Indian and Turki traders from Sinkiang, and from European missionaries and travellers who were perpetually speaking against the time-honoured custom of polyandrous matrimony such as Ladakis and Tibetans had always practised, and were introducing the "bad habit" of monogamous marriage.

He asked me how it was that we were so wealthy in Europe without

595 whom she lived in Leh. Three other daughters, Kundzom, Tsomo and
601 Rolma Putit, were all married out in *bag-ma*, the two first of these, at
[797] least, to other families. They were the mistresses, respectively, of the
[797] Ragasha and the Azhang-ni-pa households, but their younger sister
had married a certain Sang-gyā P'hüntzok who, curiously enough, was
a convert to Buddhism from his original Moslem faith, – surely a very
rare occurrence. He was employed as a manager of the Himis gumpa,
where he was in charge of trade and accounts, and made a comfortable
[792] living. But he had no household, and no *zhing-kham* to hand down,
so that they lived in quarters in the monastery grounds. His conversion
was responsible for this; the situation could nevertheless be remedied
if he purchased some land and settled on it. The couple had three
children, and the succession was thus assured beforehand.

595 (ii) *Information gathered concerning the functioning of polyandry in*
114 *Ladak*

From all these families that I visited with Nono Tseten P'hüntzok between the 30th August and the 18th September 1938, I gathered much information as to the rules of polyandry, and how these marriages functioned.

184 I heard thus of the manner in which polyandry is regulated in Ladak.
595 In many ways, it appeared to be very similar to what I had already
learned in Lahul, except that, perhaps because of the climate being colder, there seemed to be less sexual privacy. Another reason for this, probably, was that the Ladaki is more sedentary than the Lahuli and does not leave his home as regularly on commercial trips, so that one alone out of a woman's many husbands remains with her; in Ladak, all the brothers are almost constantly resident in the family house, and it is consequently more difficult to establish a sort of roster between them in their relations with the common wife.

595 Every house in Leh has a large common room, well heated because
342 the kitchen fireplace is either in it or close by, in another smaller room
[354] which communicates with it. This room is the one in which the entire
family of the *k'hang-chen* lives during the long winter months, the one
in which everything goes on all day and all night, eating, sleeping, pro-
creation and the like. Its name is the *Jan-sa* (*Byan-sa*), which means
"kitchen place", and I was told that the main reason for which every-
body lives here in winter, herded together, is because it is warm and
there is not enough fuel to heat the other rooms in the house.

595 Of course, it is not a rule that public mating in the *Jan-sa* takes place.
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THE TREK THROUGH LADEKH TO LEH 199

summer nights will have a layer of ice on its surface the next morning. Yet the winter's day can be considerably warmer outside than in. At such times of the year there is often a difference of as much as fifty degrees between the sunny courtyard of a Lamasery and the inside of one of its thick-walled cells. Dr. Arthur Neve speaking of this difference declared it to be as much as ninety degrees at times: having always found his statements to be accurate, I have no reason to question them, for I have little doubt that he went round with a thermometer, which I did not carry. 342 132 132

With practically no rainfall there is very little wood to be had even for cooking, and none for firing, so that the nights are dark except for the moon. One can imagine the chances of a crate of window glass arriving intact under such transport conditions as I have described. 354 ●

The day following my arrival in Leh I was most fortunate in meeting in the main bazaar a Buddhist priest I had before known in Ceylon, he being one of the brothers belonging to the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. He was a learned old man who, I then remembered, had once told me that his grandfather had come from "Little Tibet". Now old, he had had the good fortune to be brought to Leh by an equally aged Buddhist merchant of Kandy who, feeling that his end was near, wished, for some inexplicable reason to go to Leh, there to die. The priest who was his great friend, had come with him; the old man had died during the winter months; now the priest was to return alone. 793

He had been easy to pick out from the others, for as with the Buddhists of Ceylon, he had no head dress and wore saffron-coloured robes. The lamas or monks of Ladakh wear a cloak and shawl of dirty wine colour; they belong to what is known as the red sect; their shaven heads are covered with red, longish shaped hats with ear flaps. Some of them are married. Occasionally one sees a member of the yellow sect; they mostly come from Tibet, are of a much stricter order than the red and more ascetic and learned. They do not marry. 793 292 [795]

From him, together with one of the head monks of the great monastery, I learnt of the customs of the land; why it is that every one in five or six men one sees about is a monk, and the 793 361